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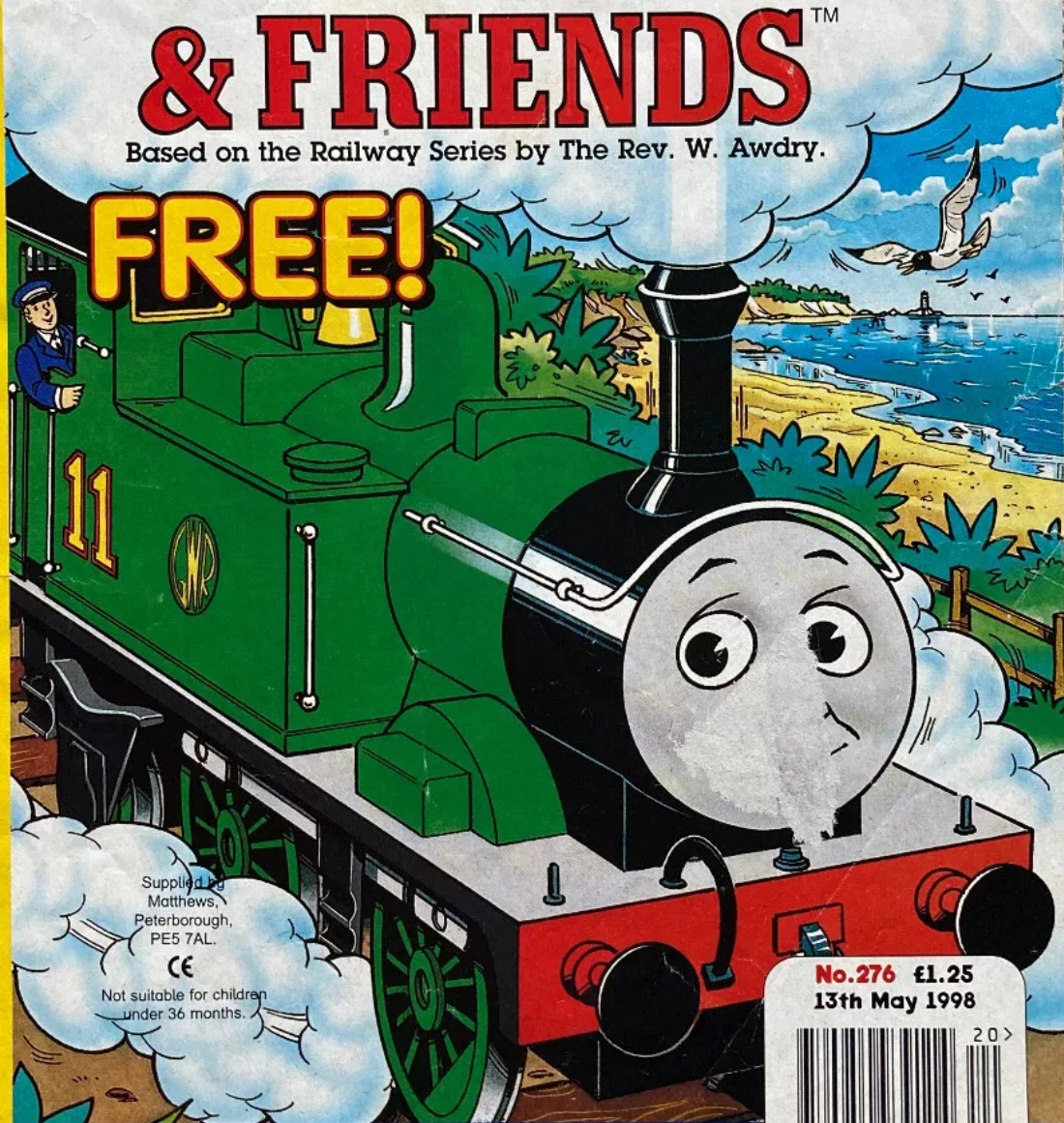
THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS™

Based on the Railway Series by The Rev. W. Awdry.

FREE!

THE TANK ENGINE
& FRIENDS

THOMAS



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CE

Not suitable for children
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No.276 £1.25
13th May 1998



Puzzles · Reading · Colouring

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Hello, everybody!

In this issue...

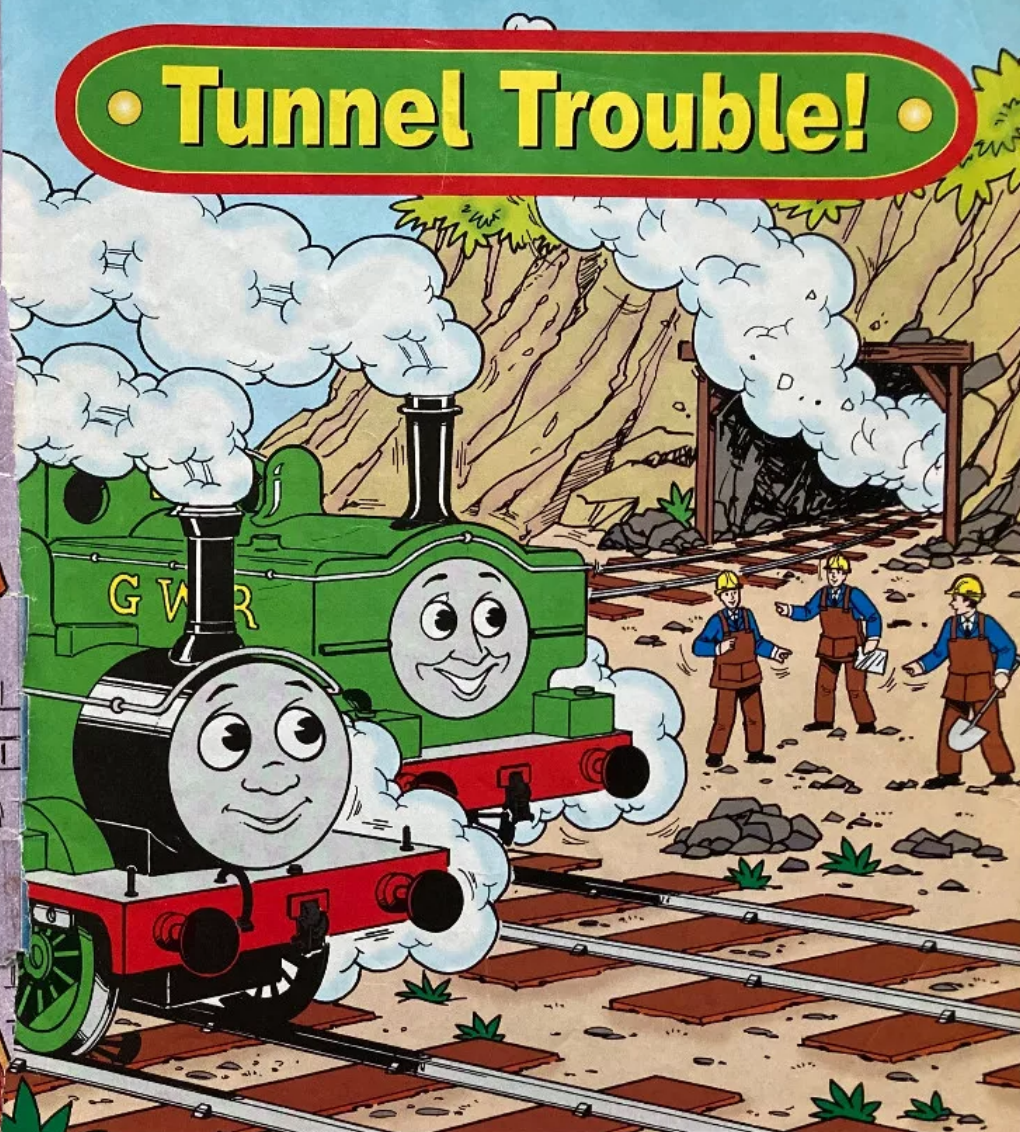
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Island of Sodor Railway

This comic belongs to

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• Tunnel Trouble! •

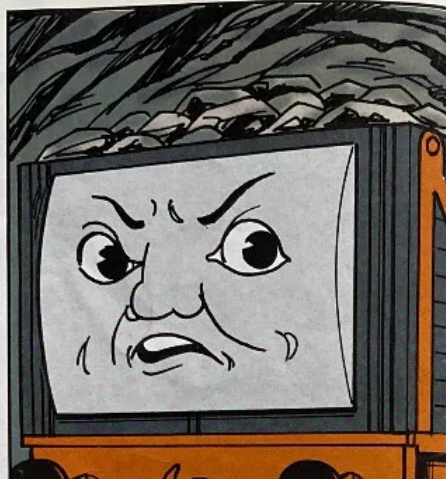


1. The Fat Controller was always trying to improve his railway. He wanted to make Duck's branch line longer. It meant workmen had to build a new tunnel through a cliff.

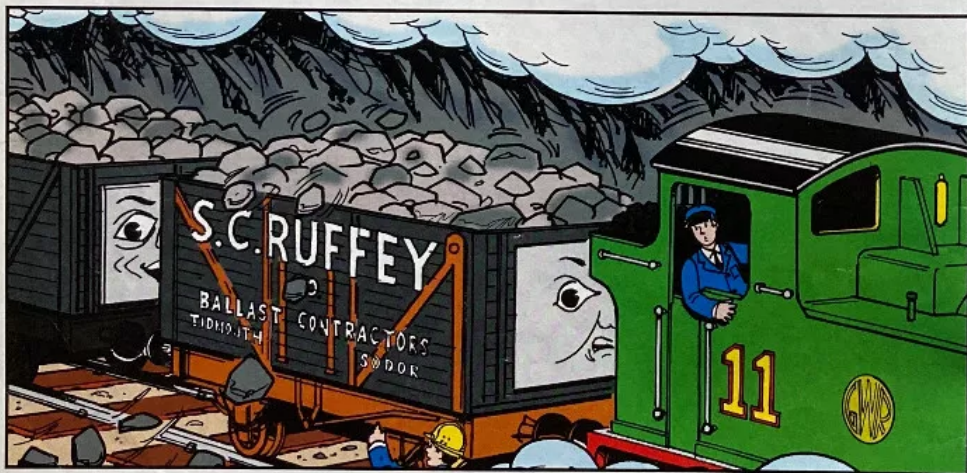
2. The work was hard and quite dangerous. Everyone had to be careful when lots of rock was blasted loose. The rock was loaded on to trucks pulled by Duck and Oliver.



3. Meanwhile, track was laid within the cliff as the tunnel went deeper. Duck and Oliver did not mind being busy. But the troublesome trucks did, especially S.C. Ruffey.



4. He complained more than all the others put together. He didn't like the dirt, the dust, the heavy rocks or anything else. To make things worse, it rained every single day.



5. "This work's too difficult and the weather's too wet!" S.C. Ruffey moaned. When Oliver told him to stop grumbling, the naughty truck bumped the engine on purpose.

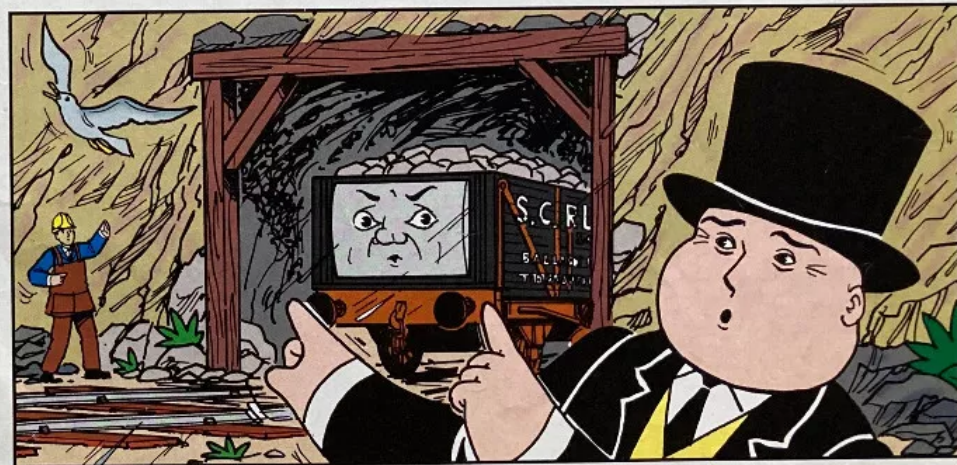
6. Oliver had quite a jolt and some of S.C. Ruffey's load tipped out. He seemed to enjoy behaving badly. But the crafty truck really didn't like the rain. So he thought of an idea.



7. "Owww!" yelled S.C. Ruffey, as more rock was loaded onto him. "What's wrong now?" Oliver asked. "I can't pull another thing," cried the naughty truck. "My springs ache."



8. S.C. Ruffey chuckled mischievously while Oliver's driver went to tell the workmen. "They won't take me out in that rain, now," grinned the truck. He was right too.



9. The Fat Controller arrived. "You must stay here in the dry," he told S.C. Ruffey, who was uncoupled from the others. "It worked!" smiled the truck. But he soon had a shock.

10. "The bad weather's set in," the Fat Controller explained. "So we'll come to collect you tomorrow." Now S.C. Ruffey did not want to spend the night alone in the dark tunnel.



11. "But Sir, my springs feel much better!" he cried. "The rest will do you good," came the reply. "Serves him right for being lazy!" said the other trucks. Even Oliver agreed.

12. Then all the engines, trucks and workmen left. The moon rose and cast an eerie light. It was silent in the big, empty tunnel. S.C. Ruffey heard the drip, drip of the rain.



13. There were strange night calls from foxes. Some bats flew past the lonely truck. He was perfectly safe. But S.C. Ruffey wished he had gone back to the yard now.

14. Next day, Oliver returned with the other trucks. S.C. Ruffey had not slept a wink. Yet he was ready and waiting to carry all the rock he could, without a word of complaint!



Dot to dot!

Duck cannot believe his eyes. Join the dots to see what he spies!



Now use your crayons to colour in the picture!

New to
collect,
swap and treasure!

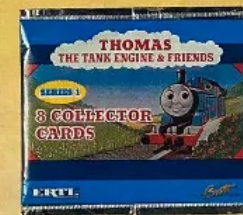
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THE TANK ENGINE
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• Special Bus Service! •

One day Thomas was surprised to find that he couldn't make his usual journey to Wellsworth. "There are major repairs on the line," explained the Fat Controller. "All passengers must get off at Knapford and take the bus." When Thomas got to Knapford, he found Bertie the bus, looking fed up. "Why are you so glum?" asked Thomas. "I thought you would be feeling very important with all the extra passengers!"

Bertie sighed. "I'm not important, Thomas," he said, sadly. "But he is." Bertie looked across at a big double decker bus in the station car park. "There are so many extra passengers that I have been brought in to help from the Mainland. I'm the Special Bus

Service!" boasted the big bus, showing them the important sign in his window.

Every day the big bus ordered Bertie around. "Turn left here, wait there. Give me those extra passengers!"

Poor Bertie didn't like it one little bit. "The worst part is that I know the island better than him, but he still bosses me about!"

Bertie said. Thomas looked thoughtful. "Do you remember when we had a race, Bertie?"

he asked. "Well I've got an idea!"

The next day it was market day at Brightsea. The Special Bus Service had never been there before. "I'll race you there!" said Bertie. "I'll show you who knows the island best!"

The big bus agreed and set off quickly for Brightsea, leaving



Bertie behind. The big bus was sure that he would win.

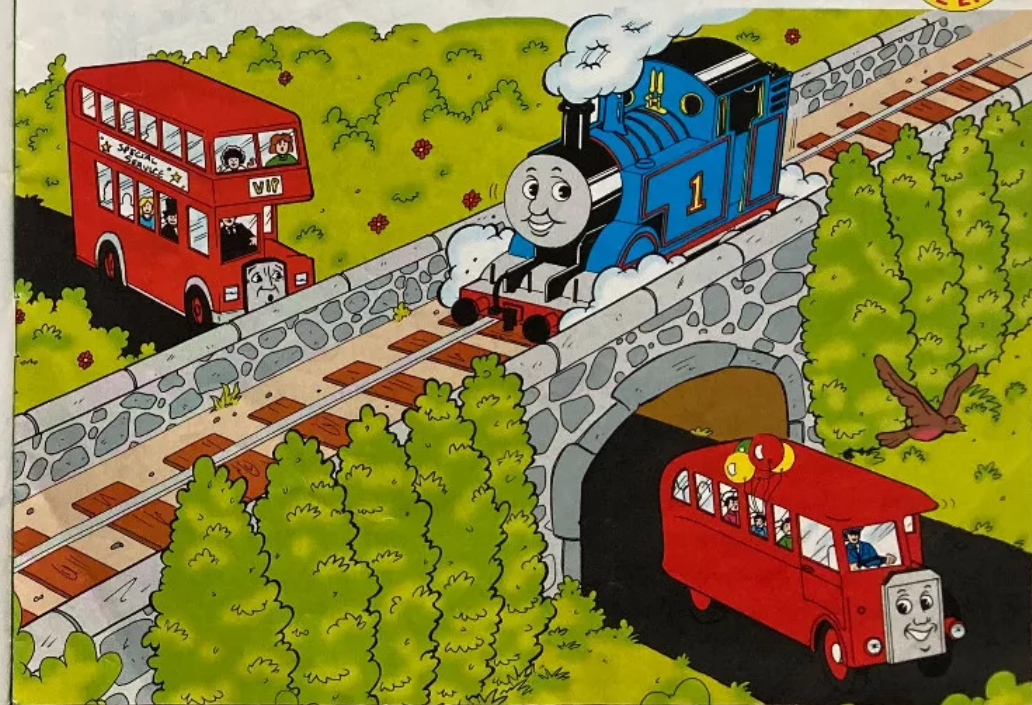
The Special Bus Service soon arrived at the railway bridge outside Brightsea. It was one of the oldest bridges on the island, and it wasn't tall enough for a double decker bus to go under! "Oh, dear," groaned the big bus. "I didn't know about the low bridge! Now I'll have to turn around and go all the way back."

Just then, a smiling Bertie drove up slowly to the bridge. "You shouldn't always be in such a hurry!" he said cheekily to the big bus, as he went easily under the bridge. "You wouldn't make such silly mistakes then!"

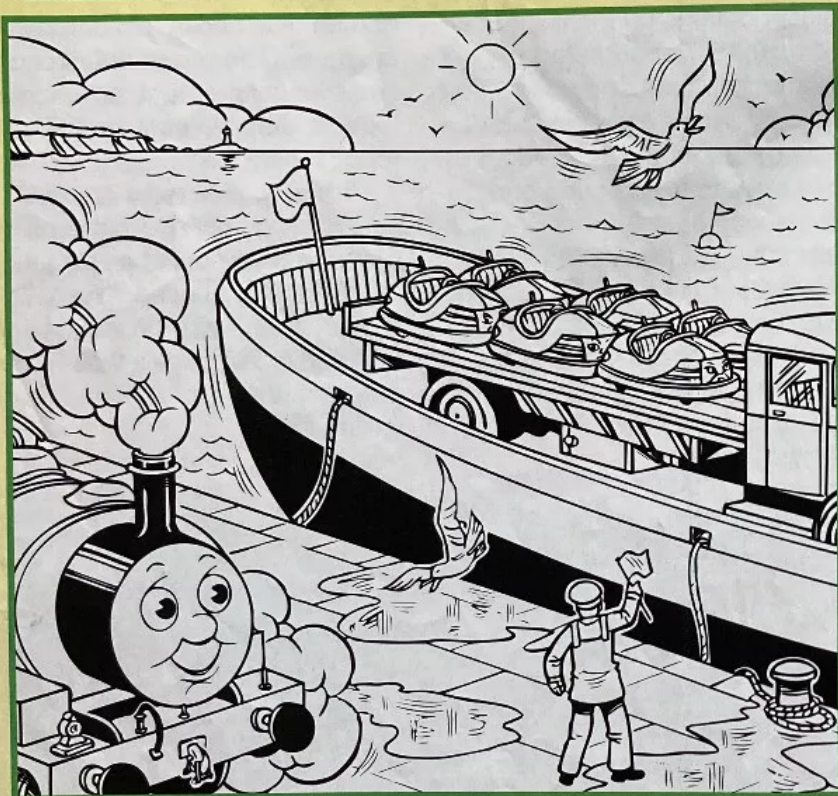
Bertie won the race, of course! And the big bus had to admit that Bertie knew the island best.

After that, the double decker always listened to what Bertie said and he didn't boss him around anymore. The buses both became firm friends after that, and worked together happily until the railway repairs were over.

"It's very nice to be special," said the big bus. "But it's even better to be a part of a special team!" he announced. "Yes, I agree!" said Bertie happily. Secretly, however, he was always grateful to Thomas for the clever idea that helped him to win the race!



The Dodgems!



1 One morning at the harbour, a travelling fair arrived by ship, but the lorry carrying the dodgems had broken down! "This is a job for Percy!" announced the Fat Controller. Percy went to the harbour and found the

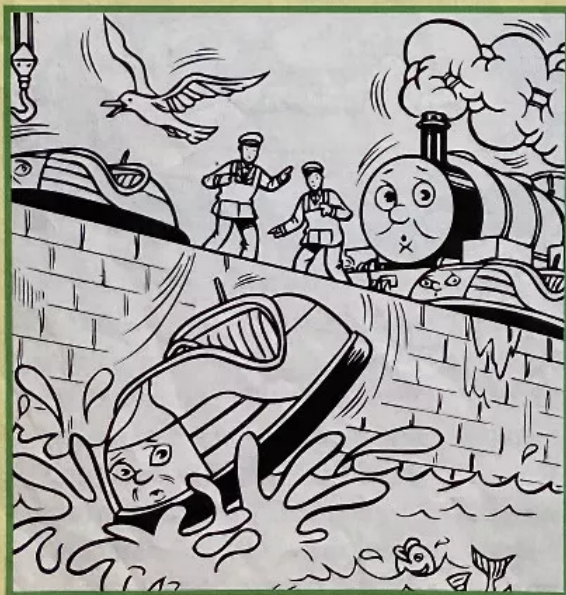
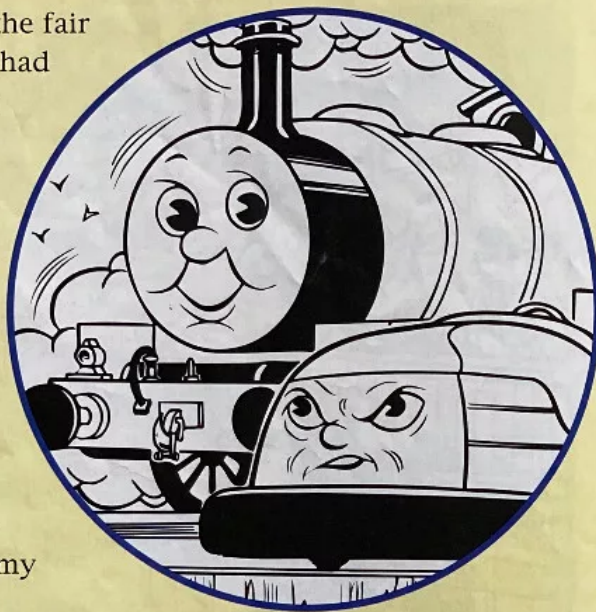
dodgems all very grumpy. "What's the matter with you lot?" he peeped. "We only live for fairground action, anything else is boring!" replied one of the dodgems. I wonder what that's all about!" Percy whistled, as he left.



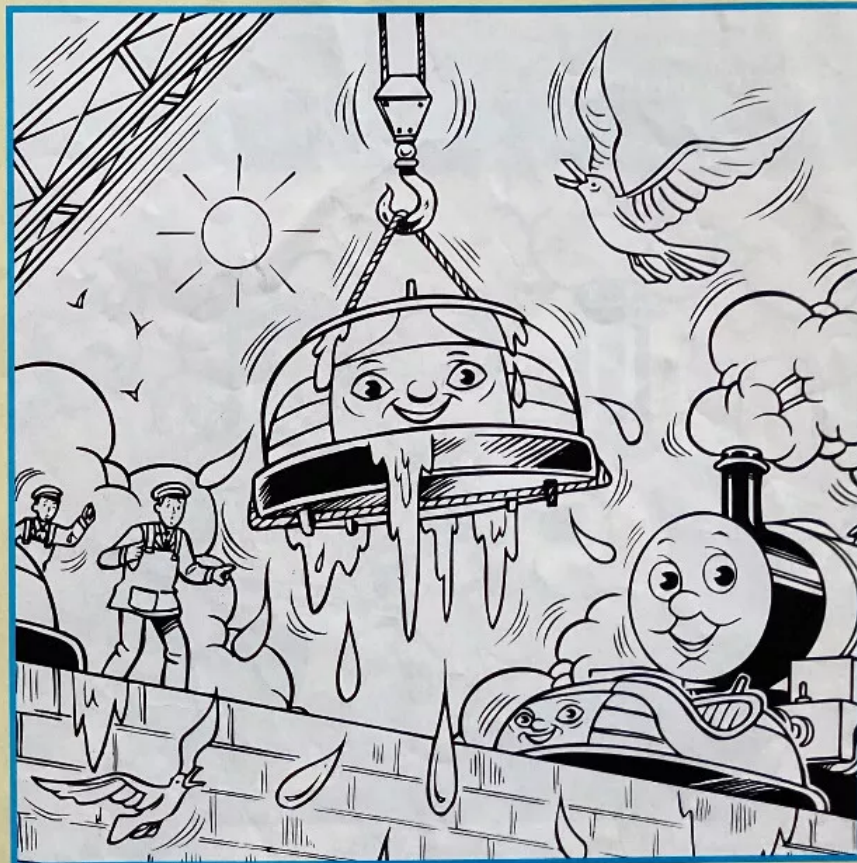
2 The next day, Percy saw the fair in full swing. The dodgems, with two passengers in each of them, were flying around the circuit bumping

and bouncing off each other and laughing their heads off! "So that's fairground action! If engines behaved like that there'd be trouble!" Percy said.

3 A few days later the fair had ended and Percy had the task of taking the dodgems back to the harbour. He found them all in a grumpy mood again. "We have to behave ourselves now that the fair is over!" one of them moaned to Percy. "That's a relief. I don't want to see any more of your fairground action on my train!" Percy replied.



4 At the harbour it was raining and the workmen were carefully unloading the dodgems down slippery ramps. Suddenly one of the dodgems skidded out of control! It bumped into another dodgem which landed in the water with a big "SPLOSHHH!" All the dodgems were grinning again but Percy was cross.



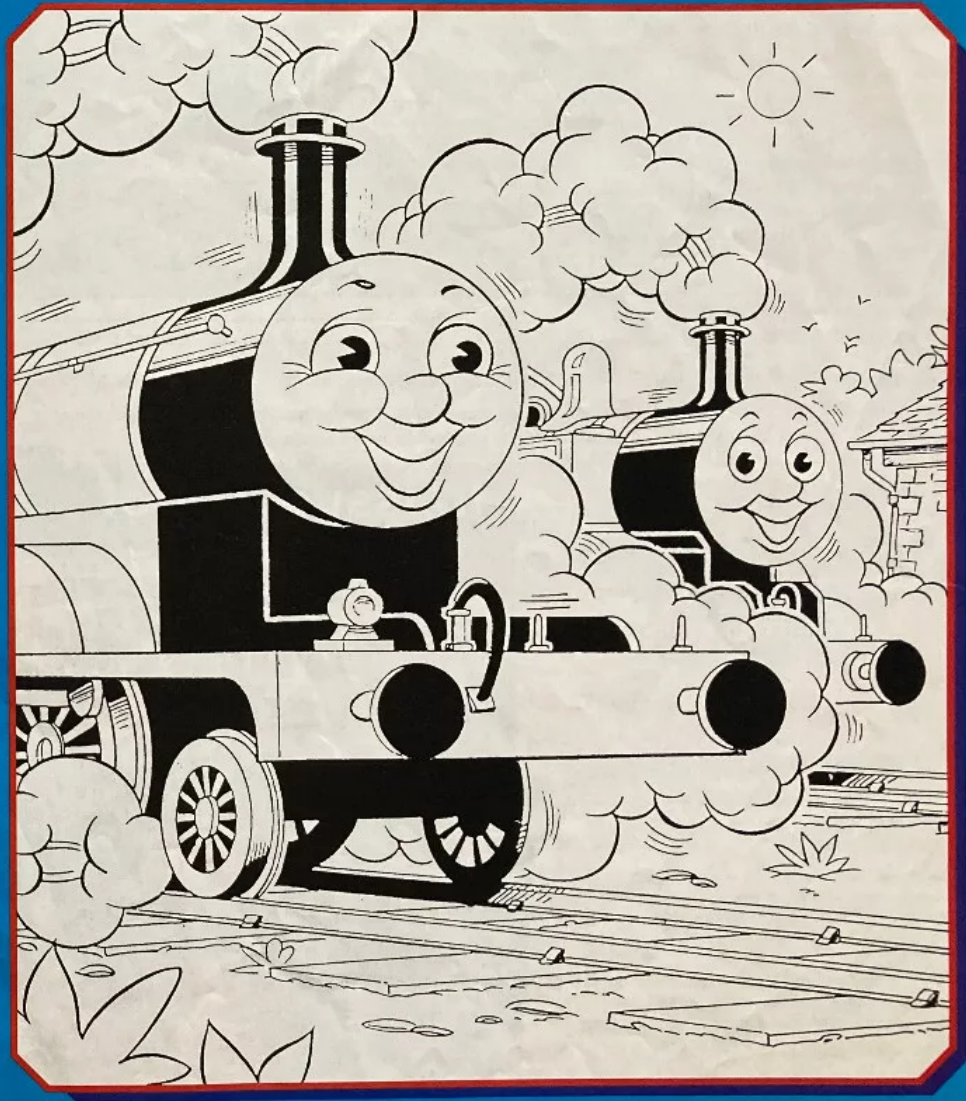
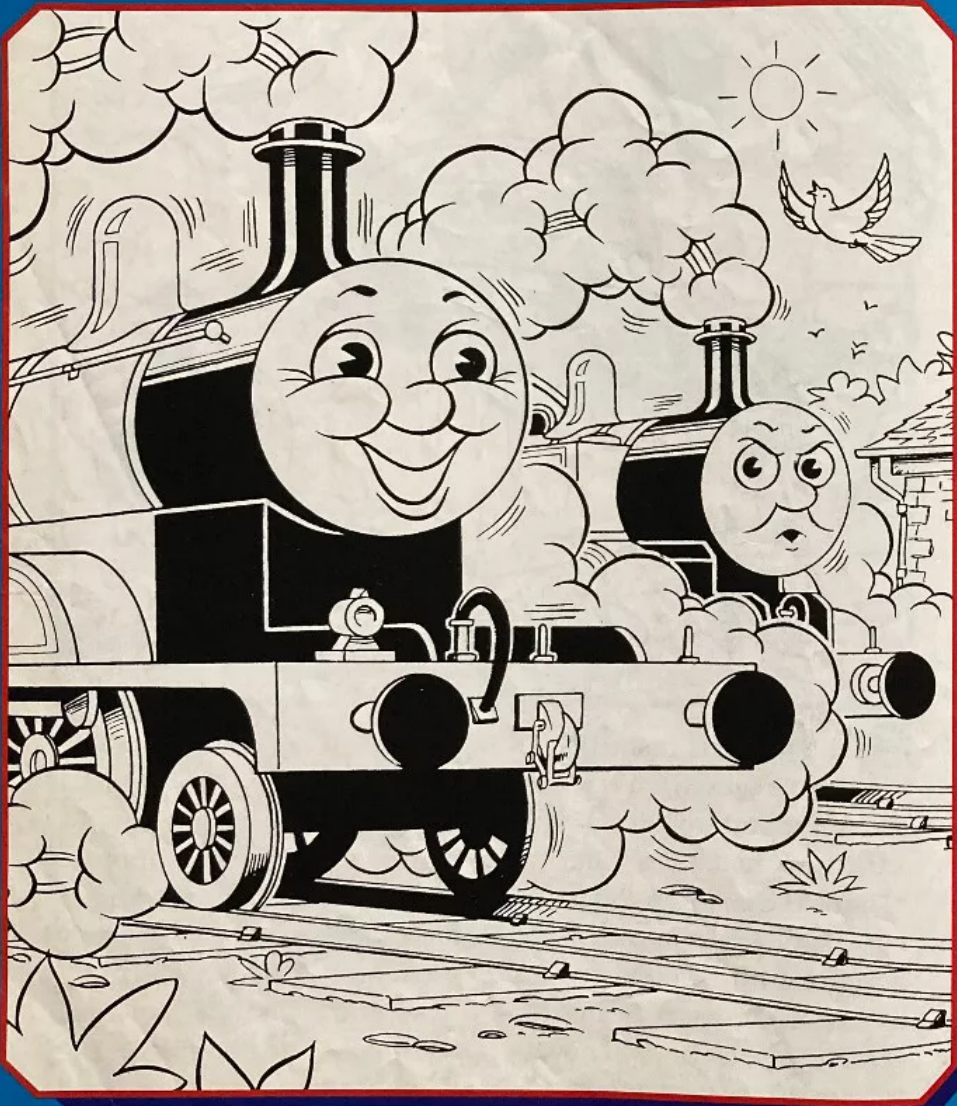
5 The harbour crane fished the dripping dodgem out of the water and to Percy's surprise it had a big grin. "That's the best fun I've had outside of a fairground!" it gurgled. Percy was stern. "You lot will never learn! Sea-water can make you ill, you know!" Percy's driver began to laugh

and called out to the dodgems, "Percy knows all about that! You might not believe this, but once upon a time Percy misbehaved and fell in the harbour too!" Percy groaned. "That's an old, old story and we haven't got time for it now!" he mumbled, in embarrassment.

The end

Spot the difference!

Thomas and James look Really Splendid indeed! Can you find the 5 differences between these two pictures?
When you've found them all colour in the pictures!



Answers: Thomas' dome, James' coupling hook, James' wheel arch stripe, the bird.

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Puzzles and colouring!

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Thank you

In issue 277 of ...



On sale from 14th May 1998!

Keeping dry!



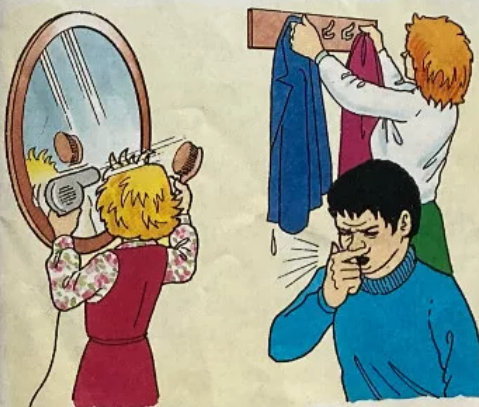
One very wet, windy afternoon, Stephen and Bridget went to tea with a friend. Later on, Lady Hatt collected them. She wore a long coat and carried a big umbrella to try and keep dry.

Stephen and Bridget hurried home with her, through the driving rain. The children pulled up their coat collars and tried to shelter

under Lady Hatt's umbrella. But a sudden gust of wind blew it inside out. "Oh! My hair's getting wet!" cried Bridget. "The rain's blowing into my eyes," shouted Stephen.

By the time Lady Hatt had fixed the umbrella, her hair was soaking, too, and raindrops trickled down her face. How pleased the three of them were to get indoors and dry off.

Then Stephen felt his nose begin to tickle. "Atchooo!" he sneezed, loudly. "I hope we don't all catch colds!" grumbled Bridget. "We should have worn hats to keep our heads dry." "The wind would have blown them away," sniffed Stephen. Lady Hatt looked thoughtful. "Tomorrow, we're going





shopping at Wellsworth," she said.

Next morning, the weather was even worse. Lady Hatt had to struggle with the umbrella again as she took her grandchildren to the Main Station to catch Thomas' passenger train. When everyone was aboard, little Thomas got underway, but it wasn't long before he began to lose steam.



At last, he puffed slowly into Wellsworth. When all his passengers had left the train, Thomas rolled into a siding to wait for some engineers to arrive and find out what was wrong with him. His driver shut off steam and pulled on the brake. "I'll get soaked, standing around here for ages," sniffed Thomas, miserably. "And if there's one thing I really hate, it's rain drip-drip-dripping down my funnel!"

Stephen and Bridget felt sorry for him. But there was nothing they could do. Lady Hatt took them to a nearby store. Later, all three walked back to the station, wearing special waterproof coats with hoods that pulled up over their heads. "We don't mind how wet and windy it is now you've bought these, Grandma," said



Bridget, happily. "We'll stay dry all over!" "Even if the umbrella does blow inside out," added Stephen.

Meanwhile, Thomas was still standing at his siding. Percy had just arrived to pick up passengers. He had also brought a new engine part for Thomas. The repair was going to take a long time.

Nearby, Stephen was carrying

the umbrella. But he put it down to tie up one of his shoelaces. Next moment, the wind blew extra hard and carried the umbrella away, high over the station roof. "Oh, no! Sorry, Grandma!" said Stephen. "We'll never catch it." "Not to worry, it's very old and we have our hoods," said Lady Hatt.

When she arrived at the station with the children, they all stared in surprise. There was Thomas smiling broadly. And no wonder! Lady Hatt's umbrella had landed, handle-first, down his funnel. "Of all places!" cried Bridget. "Look, Grandma! Thomas' funnel has a sort of hood now, too!" "We helped him keep dry, after all," laughed Stephen.

THE END



The Woolly Bear!

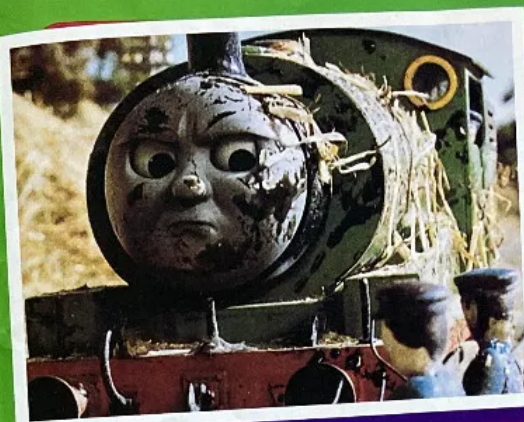
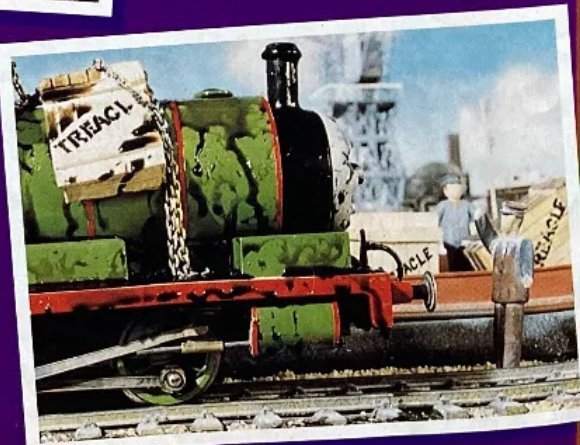
Based on *The Railway Series* by the Rev W Awdry.

It was the time of year when the workmen cut the long grass along the side of the line. They rake it into heaps beside the line to dry in the sun. One day, Percy was helping. The hay was loaded into his wagons so he could take them to the farmers.



1 Percy was taking his time and Thomas was annoyed. "You're like a green caterpillar with red stripes and you crawl like one too! You've been late every day this week," Thomas said. "Green caterpillar indeed!" fumed Percy, "I'm never late - or at least only a few minutes."

2 Percy decided to start for home early. But then came trouble. CRASH! A crate of treacle was upset all over Percy. They wiped the worst off but he was still sticky when he puffed away. The wind rose and soon it was blowing a gale. It blew a pile of hay all over Percy which stuck to the treacle.



4 When Percy got home, his driver showed him what he looked like in a mirror. "No wonder they all laughed at me. I look just like a woolly bear!" he said. Thomas and all the other engines made fun of Percy for the rest of the day about 'woolly bear', caterpillars and other creatures that creep and crawl about in the hay.



3 The hay made the rails slippery and Percy kept stalling. Everyone was waiting. Thomas seethed impatiently. Then the signalman shouted, the stationmaster stood amazed and the passengers laughed as Percy approached. "Sorry I'm late!" he panted. "Talk about hairy caterpillars!" puffed Thomas.

In Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends next time, you can read the story "Gordon off the Rails!"

Win a model of Percy!

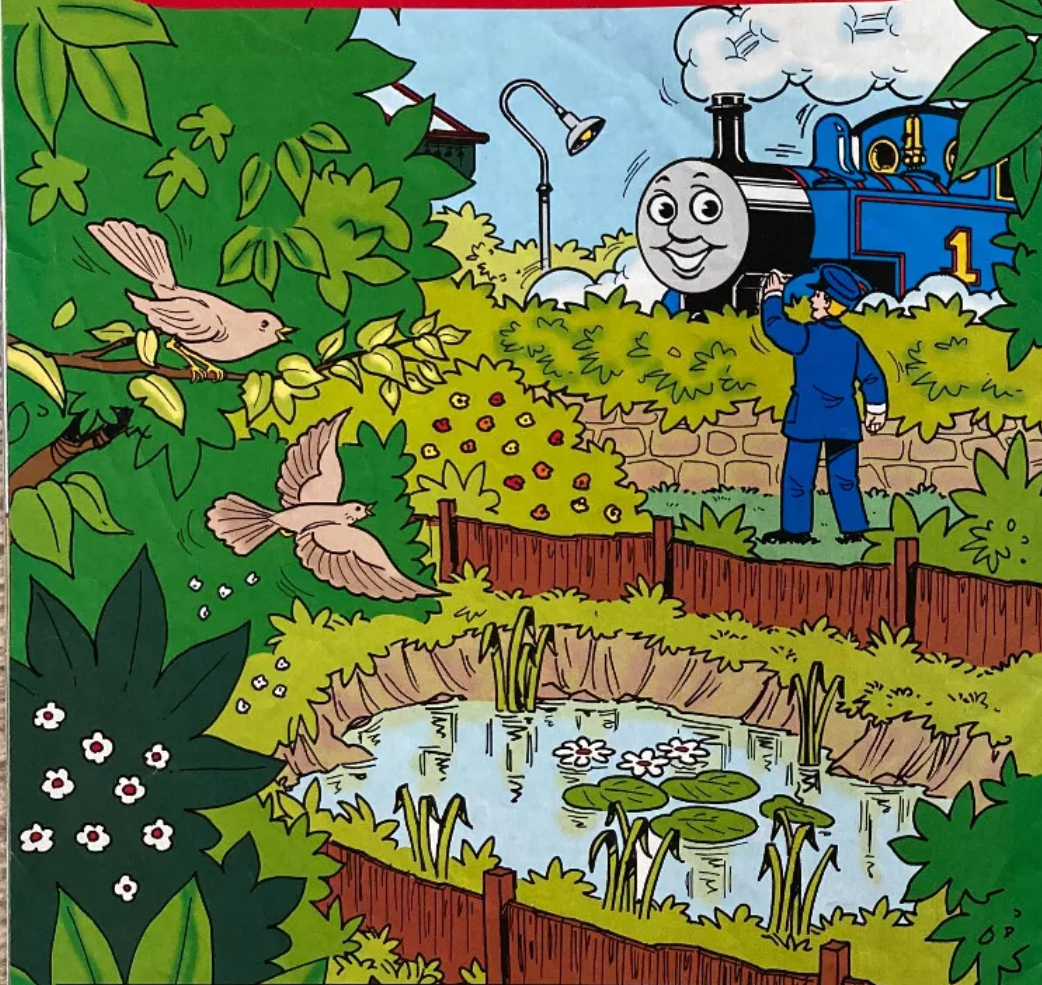
Five lucky winners can win a splendid model of Percy from the ERTL engine range!

Just send a postcard, with your name, age and address to: Thomas/276 model competition, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

Closing date: May 13th 1998.



• Trevor's present! •

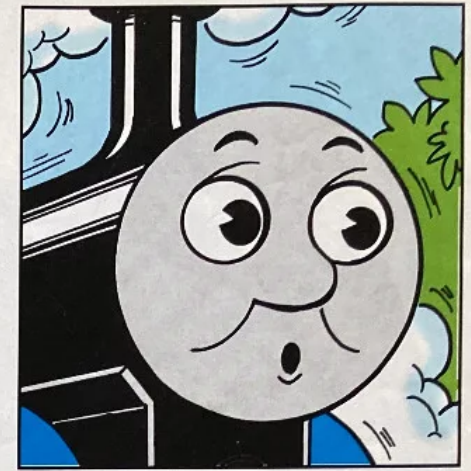


1. "The Island of Sodor looks as pretty as a picture!" smiled Thomas as he chuffed along his branch line on one fine spring day. He passed the small park next to the station.

2. One of the guards was having his lunch break. "Hello!" Thomas called. "What are you doing?" "I like feeding the birds," he explained. "They're interesting to watch!"



3. Further on he saw Trevor in the Orchard. "How are you?" Thomas called, as he stopped at a signal. "I'm alright," said Trevor, sadly. Thomas was puzzled. "What's wrong?"

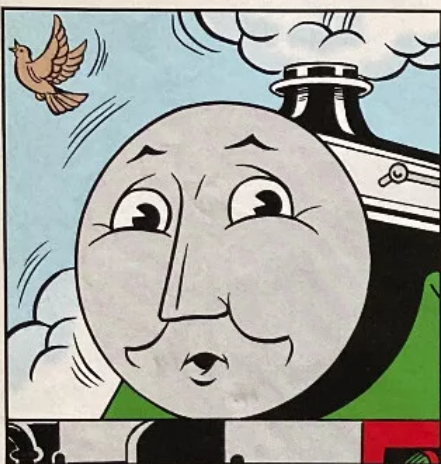


4. "Nothing much," Trevor sighed. But before Thomas could ask him anymore, the signal changed and he had to go. Thomas didn't like to see his friend so miserable.



5. Later, Thomas went past Terence who was making hay in his field. Thomas was busy thinking about Trevor and he didn't see Terence. "Hey, Thomas!" Terence called out.

6. "Sorry, I was miles away!" Thomas replied. "I was thinking about Trevor. He's very sad. Do you know why?" he went on. "Maybe he's feeling lonely," Terence replied.



7. Soon Thomas met Henry. He told him all about Trevor. "He does sound lonely," Henry agreed. "I don't get to see him much, these days, I'm always so busy," he said.



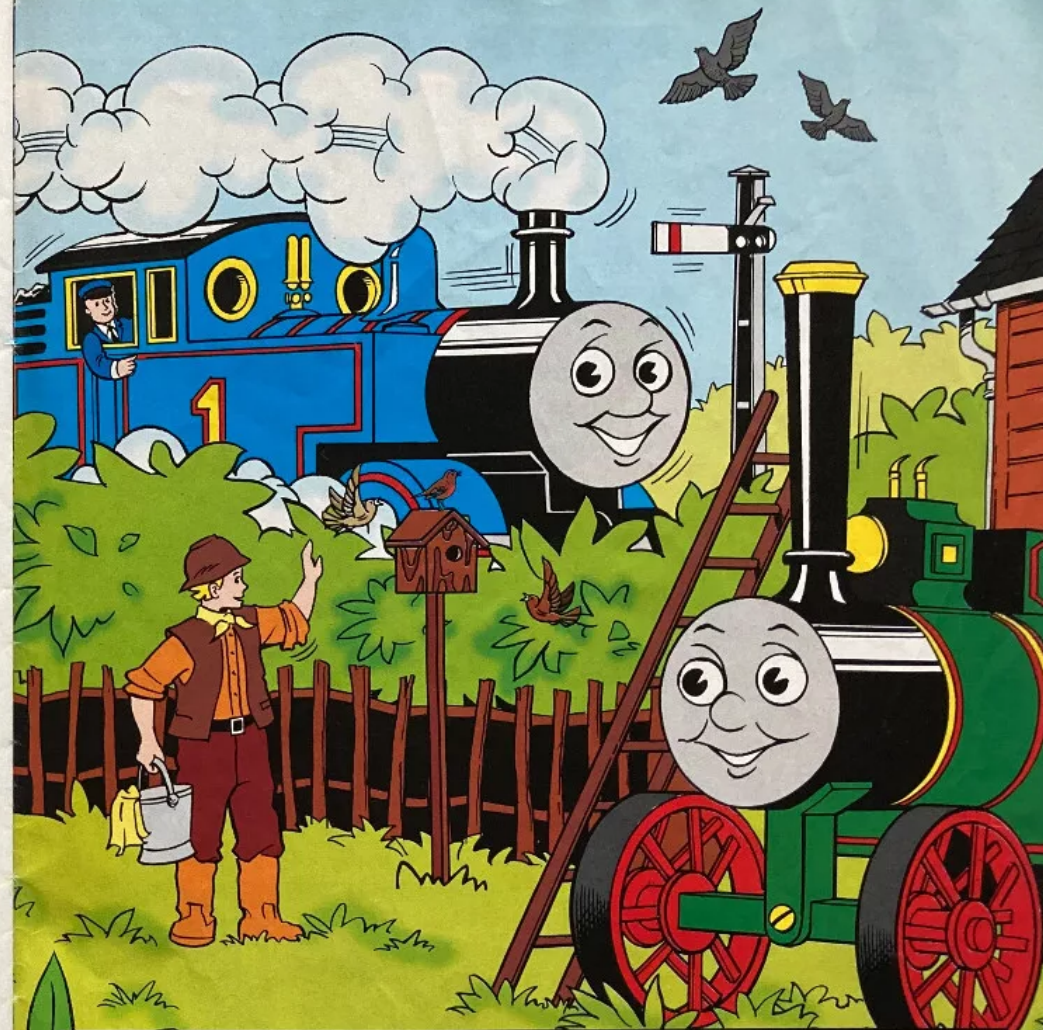
9. Thomas told the Fat Controller. The Fat Controller was only too happy for them to try and cheer Trevor up. "That's a great idea. I've got a spare one in my shed," he said.



8. The following day, Thomas' guard returned to work. When he heard about Trevor being lonely, he told Thomas not to worry. "I've got an idea," he winked.



10. When Trevor was tucked away in his shed for the night, Thomas' guards crept into the Orchard. They had a bird house with them which they fixed into the ground.



11. The guards put seed in the bird house then they crept away. Imagine Trevor's surprise in the morning! He rolled out of his shed to discover lots of birds flying around the brand new bird house. Thomas puffed by. "Do you like it?" he asked. "Oh yes!" Trevor said. "Is it for me?" "Of course!" Thomas said. "It was my guard's idea."

12. "The birds will always keep you company," Thomas explained. "Oh, thank you Thomas, I love bird watching!" Trevor smiled. "What good friends I have!" he went on. Just then Jem Cole came out of the shed. "Hello, what's this?" he said, pointing to the bird house. Trevor smiled. "That," he said, "is the best present I have ever had!"



The mail train!

Please send your letters, pictures and drawings to Mail Train, Thomas, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

Star Letter

Dear Fat Controller,
I think Duke and Stepney look so much alike that they must be brothers. Can engines be brothers? I think they can but Mummy says they can't. Grandma will give a bar of chocolate to the winner. Can you help us, please?

From Nathan Stobart, aged 2.

Enjoy your chocolate, Nathan! Engines can indeed be brothers. There are the twins Bill and Ben and Donald and Douglas. Also, Rheneas has a brother on the Mainland. Duke and Stepney are not brothers, though.



If we print your **STAR LETTER**, you will receive a splendid Thomas video as a prize!

Lord Harry is working very hard pulling his train. By Kane Valdes, aged 6!



Prize Poem!

Here's a marvellous poem by 6 year old Stephen Barry!

Harold is a helicopter
Always helping on the line.
Reaching awkward places
Overhead all the time.
Looking and listening, ready to go.
Dear old Harold - My hero!



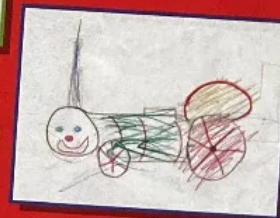
Anyone who has a drawing printed on this page will win a set of special Thomas Glitter Stickers!

What a splendid picture of Toad by 4 year old Peter Swallow!



5 year old Amy Jackson sent me a magnificent drawing of Bertie the bus!

This is Trevor the Traction engine, 2 year old Jordyn Archer's best friend!

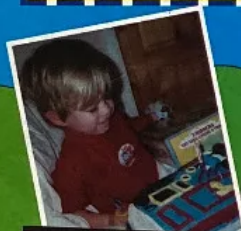


Happy Birthday!

David Rafter, aged 9,
Alexander McRoberts,
aged 1, Nathan
Goldstone, aged 5!

Also to
Kirsty Goldstone, aged 1,
Christopher Gaunt,
aged 5 and Gregory
Chisholm, aged 4!

Peep!
Peep!



Jay Munkey,
aged 4!



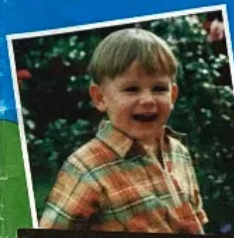
Toby Truman-
Wright, aged 5!



Stuart Harrison-
Baker, aged 5!



Liam Scott
Dale, aged 5!



Thomas Lloyd
Davies, aged 3!



Davey Cooper,
aged 2 1/2!



Beanbag Competition!



6 lucky readers will win a cosy and squashy Thomas beanbag!

Just tell us:
Which of
Thomas' friends
is chuffing over
the bridge in
the picture?

Marvel readers have a fantastic opportunity to purchase the beanbag at a special launch price of £21.99 from Heart!



Heart Fashions and Designs stock over 200 Thomas products in their mail order catalogue. For your **FREE** copy, telephone 01543 377182, quoting reference 276, or write to them at the competition address below.

Send your answers on a postcard along with your name, age and address to: Thomas Beanbag competition, Heart Fashions and Designs, 37a High Street, Walsall Wood, W. Midlands, WS9 9LR.

All entries must be received by 21st May 1998.

This competition is open to all readers other than employees and their families of participating companies. We cannot accept any responsibility for prizes lost or damaged in the post. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence shall be entered into.